

what sort of education all this meant; what manner of life these girls were to live. Oh! I was told, they are to be governesses. And Miss Mason's idea is that they should not be like daintily-cut crystal vases filled to the brim with a jumble of essences, each excellent in its own fragrance, but terrible when poured out in the uncertain mixture, on hapless babes. Her governesses are not to be carefully-moulded, well-charged vessels, but girls, real girls, human girls, girls flexible in body and in mind, with all their senses about them, alert, ready for emergencies, so accustomed to nature-study that they can study the human nature of their pupils, so awake themselves that they can awaken, and with such an interest in the world and in life, that they can make life interesting. This is what I gathered; but I am not going to write a dissertation on the subject. My mind and my heart return to the birchwood. I am not sorry that I was forbidden to enjoy my reveries. I think, from what I saw, I might do worse than entrust my boys and girls, if I had any, to one of these bright, quick, joyous girls to be trained.

PETÖFI SÁNDOR (ALEXANDER PETÖFI).

In the first hour of the year 1823, the great Hungarian lyric poet was born at Kis (Little) Körös, not far from Buda-Pest, on that wonderful Lowland which stretches for hundreds of miles, a shimmering sea of green or golden corn, where the sun delights to play his fairy tricks of Fata Morgana or mirage. Sándor's father was a well-to-do butcher, who loved his son, though he could not understand the poet-soul that gradually unfolded before his eyes; and in such cases it is almost equally impossible for the greater to comprehend the less. Good Petöfi Stefan was hurt, too, by his son's refusal to follow him in his occupation:—

Von Kindheit an, geliebter Vater,
Dein treuer Mund mich ernstlich bat,
Ich sollt', wie du, ein Metzger werden—
Dein Sohn jedoch ward Literat.

Mit deinem Werkzeug schlägst du Ochsen,
Mein Kiel schlägt auf die Menschen los—
Genau genommen ist's dasselbe,
Verschieden ist der Name bloss.

(Translated by J. G.)

Sándor's mother was a loving, simple-minded woman, whom her son adored with reverent tenderness:—

Wozu machst du dir, theure Mutter,
Des Schwarzbrotts wegen so viel Noth?
Es mag ja sein, dass in der Fremde
Dein Sohn sich nährt mit weissrem Brot.

Gieb uns das Brot her, theure Mutter,
Mag es so schwarz wie immer sein:
Bei dir schmeckt besser mir das schwarze,
Als sonst wenn's noch so weiss und fein.—(J. G.)

Sándor went to school in various places, apparently receiving a very "good education," since he learnt to draw and to play the piano. About 1838 he went to the "Gymnasium" at Schemnitz (not Chemnitz!) where his natural bent first showed itself clearly, both in various little poems and in the fact that, spite of rules and regulations, he could not keep away from the theatre. No doubt Sándor felt his natural impulse was a higher law and more worthy of obedience than mere College discipline, but his father saw matters in a different light; and when the master's bad report was followed by other complaints of different kinds, poor Stefan felt his son was disappointing all his hopes, and the coolness between them deepened for awhile. Poor Petöfi *père!* just at this time he lost his fortune, and was obliged to begin again in his old age to work hard for his daily bread, forsaking his old occupation and trying his luck at inn-keeping.

Meanwhile, one gloomy February morning, Sándor left Schemnitz and came to Pest, attracted by the National Theatre, where he obtained some insignificant employment. However, his father soon arranged that he should spend the summer with a certain relative in Pest, and recommence his studies at the beginning of the scholastic year. The first part of the programme was carried out during some happy months, when Sándor devoured Latin classics and wrote many little poems. But when he went to Oedenberg, instead of studying, he enlisted, and remained in the Service till, in 1841, his health broke down.

The next two years Sándor passed in earnest study, varied by much verse-writing (one lyric won a prize from the Hungarian Association), and by his appearance on the stage with several companies. In 1842, to his great joy, he made a decided hit in one of his parts, but next year left the stage and joined the Kisfaludi Company as translator, having to work hard all this time to gain a scanty living.

An der Donau Rand ein Häuschen stehet—
Ueber dieses Häuschen nichts mir gehet :
In mein Auge dringet gleich die Thräne,
So ich dieses Häuschen nur erwähne.

Freunde reisen nach der Heimat eben :
Welche Post soll ich der Mutter geben ?
Führt der Weg euch nach der Mutter Hütte,
Sprecht, Landsleute, ein bei ihr, ich bitte !

Sagt dass sie nicht wein', dass sie sich schone,
Günstig sei das Glück nun ihrem Sohne—
Wüsste sie, wie ich muss Mangel tragen,
Ach, ihr Mutterherz hört' auf zu schlagen !—(J. G.)

The year 1844 saw the publication of Petöfi's first book of poems, thanks to the influence of the poet Vörösmarty, and soon Wahott found a place for him on the staff of his newspaper.

Petöfi immediately sprang into the place that was his by divine right of genius: the people recognised in him the voice of the nation's Spirit, and he became their darling. Yet he made one more attempt to win success in that lower, narrower sphere which exercised such a strange fascination over him. For the third time he went on the stage, but, fortunately, a marked failure weaned him from that career.

Hier sei es allen mitgeteilt,
Die mir im Herzen sind gewogen,
Dass meiner Zukunft Horizont
Ein trüber Nebel hat umzogen.

Bisher, war ich Thalia's Priester,
Zur Büchermache jetzt ich geh' :
O lebe wohl, romantisch Leben,
Lebt, Abenteuer, wohl—ade !—(J. G.)

This year and the next saw the first great tragedy of Petöfi's life: the early death of Etelka, or Adelaide (sister-in-law of one of the Wahotts), whom Sándor loved with passionate adoration, and mourned with most poignant anguish. Both the love and the grief still live in a number of wonderful poems—roses still wet with the dew of a poet's dawn of love, violets yielding their sweetest scent when crushed under Death's iron heel. Petöfi in his love and in his grief sang, as the wild birds sing, because he could not help it, because his joy and his hope, his despair and his pain could not but find a voice in song. The secret of his power to touch and thrill the heart is this, that every note comes

from his own inmost soul. I think this can be felt even after translation from his rich, terse, Eastern tongue to the colder Western languages, though unfortunately, the poems lose as much in character as does an air written for the violin when played on the piano.

AUF DER DONAU.

Wie oft zerreisst den Busen deiner Flut,
O Strom, der Schiffe Kiel, der Stürme Wuth!

Sie reissen Wunden dir so tief und weit,
Wie nie dem Menschenherzen je ein Leid.

Und doch, wenn Sturm und Schiffe sind vorbei,
Schliesst spurlos sich die Wunde stets auf's Neu.

Nur wenn das Herz einmal zerrissen ist
Kein Balsam je die Wunde wieder schliesst!—(J. G.)

I suppose it is a tribute to the depth and not to the shallowness of the human heart, that though the roses and violets were all buried in Etelka's grave, Sándor still found pansies and fragrant mignonette to give to Julia Szendrey, whom he met in 1846, and who became next year his tenderly-loved wife. When the sun has gone down and darkness shrouds the earth, some travellers wait in patience through the long night of separation, content to expect till after the last death-cold hour they shall see the sun again. Others, when the sun has set, light the fire of domestic comfort and dwell at ease. Who shall say which is the truly wise course?

Petőfi indeed found true heart's ease in his home-life now, tranquil happiness that is breathed forth in many a tender joyous song. I cannot help feeling jealous for poor Etelka when I read such lines as these:—

In dem Grabe ruht mein erstes Liebchen
Und mein Schmerz war Mond der Grabesnacht.
Neue Liebe ging mir auf, wie Sonne,
Und der Mond—weicht vor der Sonne Macht.

But indeed Julia seems to have been well-worthy of all this love, for she entered into every feeling of her husband's great, noble heart with true womanly sympathy.

In 1848 Petőfi's cup of joy was full to the brim when a little son was born to him:—

ZUR GEBURT MEINES SÖHNCHENS.

Her in meinem Arm mit meinem Kinde,
Lasst mich's pressen an die Brust mit Hast!
Ganz wie neu-geschaffen ich mich finde,
Da mein Lebensbaum trieb jungen Ast, etc.

About this time Petőfi, together with Vörösmarty and Aran, planned a translation of Shakespeare's plays, and Sándor himself finished and published *Coriolanus* before the undertaking was interrupted by the great political events of '48. Was it not fitting that just at this moment the Hungarian poet should give to his nation this story of the victory of patriotism over all more personal passions, even over that tenderest love—a mother's? Did Julia's heart thrill prophetically as she read how those noble women sacrificed their best beloved to their country, though at cost of widowhood, of childlessness, as she read of little Marcus pleading for the boon that should—though he knew it not—make him fatherless?

Sándor himself was ready to sacrifice everything for liberty, for his country's freedom from the hateful yoke of Austrian oppression. He had sung many a wild song in praise of holy liberty, in bitter curse on tyranny, and biting scorn of listless patience—"much-praised virtue of both sheep and asses"; many a song, too, of fierce love for his suffering fatherland. I wish I could quote "The song of the Dogs," "The song of the Wolves," "Sword and Chain," or that wonderful poem in which he speaks of the death he would choose to die: In that springtide of battle, when the blood-red roses bloom on the warriors' breast, when the battle's nightingale, the trumpet, loudly sings in praise of heroic deeds, he prayed, a red death-blossom might flower in his heart, and as he fell from his horse to the earth, Freedom, noblest of heaven's daughters, might press one kiss on his lips in acceptance of the sacrifice. All Hungary had been thrilled by his songs; not a man but was ready to die for freedom and fatherland, and the revolutionary ferment of 1848 (beginning in Paris with the February riots and the establishment of the second Republic, making itself felt in

the United Kingdom in "Chartism" and "Young Ireland," in Austria forcing that iron jailor of liberty, Metternich, to resign) in Hungary became the match which fires the mine.

On the 15th of March, Petöfi, with Jokai, the great novelist, and a band of enthusiasts from the University, enacted the bloodless revolution which obtained liberty of the Press for the nation, that had so long, thanks to Metternich, been gagged and speechless under all her wrongs. The only act of violence these heroes were guilty of, was the forcible entry of a printing-house, whose prudent proprietor had refused to print a certain poem of Petöfi's, which he judged likely to be offensive to the Government.

The little band, therefore, printed this poem themselves; it was a fiery song, improvised under the inspiration of the moment, and afterwards became the war-song of the patriots. Literally translated, the first verse runs thus:—

Arise, oh Magyar, thy country calls.
Here is the time, now or never,
Shall we be slaves or free?
That is the question—choose!
We swear by the God of the Magyars,
We swear to be slaves no longer!

While Pest was resounding with the exultation of her inhabitants, the Diet in Pressburg was energetically reforming many evils of the Hungarian Constitution, and bringing it into accord with the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity. Passed, *without opposition, from the Court at Vienna*, these new regulations *became law*, and were publicly proclaimed at Pressburg on April 11th, *in the presence of the Emperor-King*.

The Government then moved its seat to Pest, and when Petöfi took his seat in the Lower House, in July, it seemed that the long-needed reforms were assured, and the nation's hopes realised; that the new era of liberty had begun without the birth-throes of war or civil discord. But alas! the parable of the new patch on the old garment was once again to prove its eternal truth.

With incredible perfidy Austria, which had seemed to sanction the measure adopted by the Hungarian Diet at Pressburg, now incited the Croats, Wallachs and Serbs to massacre and plunder the Hungarians among whom they

lived in the east and south, thus compelling the country to take up arms in self-defence. The Diet voted the necessary supplies, and men from all parts of Hungary hastened to offer their services, their lives if need be. Petöfi obeyed his country's call, left Julia and her little son, and became, first captain and private secretary to General Bem, later, Major. In a short time the danger from these enemies was overcome. Then Austria threw off all disguise and called out her forces on every side against Hungary. The Viennese themselves rose in arms to protest against the Government's treachery and tyranny, but Prince Windischgratz easily crushed the revolt, and marched into Hungary, after delivering his ultimatum, declaring unconditional surrender of the whole country the only terms he could accept—terms that were indignantly rejected, needless to say.

Early in January, 1849, he took Buda, forcing the dictator, Kossuth, to move the seat of the Government to Debreczen, the old peasant capital. I wish I could tell at least the names of the most splendid of the Hungarian patriots, and of the most glorious victories they won under their brilliant generals, Bem and Görgei (hard g's please!). By the close of the spring of '49 only two cities, Buda and Temesvár, remained in the hands of Austria. Then was the moment when peace should have been concluded on honourable terms, securing to Hungarians that liberty for which they had fought so nobly.

But alas! the opportunity was lost. Kossuth, burning with the remembrance of his own wrongs, and flushed with victory, caused the Parliament to declare that the House of Hapsburg had forfeited its right to the crown of Hungary. The result of this lamentable mistake was that Russia felt herself justified in coming to the help of Austria. One more brilliant victory, the capture of Buda after a gallant assault, crowned the Hungarian arms. Then the tide turned; 200,000 Russians crossed the border, and the Hungarians lost battle after battle. Petöfi took part in many of these engagements, and at the same time continued his noble work of encouraging his brothers-in-arms in their struggle. On the 31st July, 1849, Petöfi, now Major, led his men to battle at Schässberg, and was never again seen by his countrymen. Had he, like Körner, received the crown of death in battle for fatherland? Or can it be true—can such

fathomless pain and sorrow fall to human lot as that he, Liberty's sweetest singer, Hungary's most devoted son, should be (as was believed) carried off by a people of slaves and tyrants, far from his native land, to languish in captivity in Siberia for the rest of his life? In 1880 the rumour arose—"Petöfi lives yet." After reading Rudyard Kipling's heart-breaking story of the officer who was carried off to Siberia in the Crimean war (I think), and rejoined his regiment in India some thirty years later, one dimly grasps the unspeakable, unthinkable horror of this fate. To hear from cruel jeering lips the stories of Görgei's surrender at Vilagos (August 13th), of the flight of Kossuth and his fellows to Turkey, of poor General Klapka's hopeless defence of Komárom, of his capitulation on honourable terms, treacherously repudiated by the Austrians; how Baron Haynau, of cursed memory, hanged the gallant officers, savagely resenting that he had no power to put their noble loyal hearts to shame; of the atrocities, the brutal cruelties perpetrated by him on delicate women, whose only crime had been that of sheltering, feeding, or nursing their country's soldiers—think what torture this would be to Sándor, apart from his ceaseless yearning towards his beloved wife and child.

What added depth of meaning does this awful doubt, as to the poet-patriot's fate, give to the last words of this verselet, written by him long before:—

How blest to whom is given
This boon by fate's kind hand:—
To live for wine and wife,
And die for fatherland!

My object in this brief sketch has been to tell a life-story that has deeply touched and interested me. This is my excuse for ignoring completely many sides of Petöfi's poetic genius. I should like to quote some of the poems that show how his art is often near akin to that of Heine, others that display his sympathy with nature, or again his power of humour and of satirical character drawing. If any of my readers wish to study his writings further, I may tell them of an excellent little volume of selections translated into German, published in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek, at

40 pfenning; another German translation is by Neugebauer, though I believe no English version is to be had. Foreign booksellers also supply Hungarian grammar dictionaries, and Petöfi's works in the original!

A PARIS ORPHANAGE.

It was night when I arrived at the little home in Levallois-Perret, and the girls had gone to rest. We went round to see them asleep, three in one room, four in the next, and two more upstairs. For this "petite famille" consists of nine girls, their ages ranging from five to fifteen, all French, except Jacoba, who is a Boer refugee from Pretoria. Although most of them are orphans rescued from sad surroundings, they have plenty of friends now: "Marraine," who founded the home; "Tante," her friend; and "Marnan," who is matron; while each child has "sa petite amie," some kind friend who visits or writes to her, sends her presents, and perhaps makes her frocks and pinafores.

The children show their light-heartedness by singing from morning to night. One wakens to the sound of their voices, which not even their hatred of the daily cold bath can still.

By seven o'clock, having made beds and dusted rooms, they are downstairs to prayers, and breakfast follows under the plum trees in the little garden. Now indeed voices are quiet, until the porridge and bread and milk have disappeared. Then household duties await most of the party. For example, Jeanne arranges the visitors' bedroom, and Marie and Lucienne have a floor to polish, while Georgette must go to the market to help to carry home the vegetables and fruit, which form a large proportion of the food of the household. We assemble in the play room for drill at nine o'clock. "La gymnastique" is in high favour, especially the musical ball-drill, at which Marie usually wins most praise. The next half hour is devoted to Nature Note-books. They were introduced at the beginning of this long vacation, and now the new idea of drawing with the